Depot Town Rag

December 1989

The River and its Shores
Frederick Law Olmsted, 1913

Crime Report

Black Forest Cheesecake

"Decline over,"DDA

. . . and other strictly local stuff

A Publication of the DEPOT TOWN ASSOCIATION, INC. The Old Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, MI 48198

Bakers' Best cook book published for Holiday

At last, the winners' recipes are available, as promised, in time for the holiday season. The Victorian Bakers' Cook Book will be at participating Depot Town shops in time for the Victorian Holiday.

Forty-six local bakers responded to last year's call for holiday baking recipes in a bake-off sponsored by Depot Town merchants at the Freighthouse on December 4, 1988. With such exotic names as M. Brautigan's "Victorian Decadence Cake Roll" as well as the exotic culinary tastes to deal with, the judges fairly rolled onto the Freighthouse deck in agony after having to taste so many rare delicacies in one afternoon's sitting.

At five dollars per entry, organizers had hoped the response would not have been so overwhelming, but neighborhood cooks and bakers turned out in surprising numbers. Bonni Rosen-Fine entered four excellent recipes, herself.

Darlene Mood took first prize, an 1890 Victorian Baking Cupboard, for her "Black Forest Cheesecake," with the winning recipe which appears on page two of this issue.

A Victorian Holiday

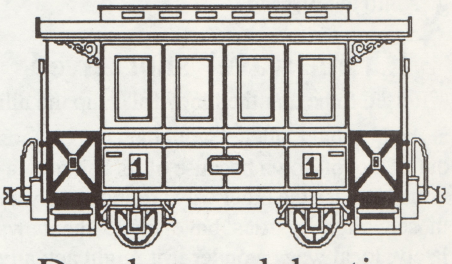
11 am - 7 pm, Sunday, December 10

in Ypsilanti's historic Depot Town

Open Houses with refreshments, holiday window displays and store specials.
The first edition of a **Depot Town Bakers' Cookbook**:
The best recipes from the 1988 Victorian Holiday Baking Contest.
Visit Santa in The Old Caboose from 4-6 pm.
Our Lady's Madrigal Singers. 7:30 pm, Aubree's Second Floor, $2 admission.

Happy Holidays

Depot Town's holiday building lights are the district's greetings to all who have made our success possible



Day-long celebration keeps the tradition

"Welcome back to the Good Old Days," says this year's merchant brochure for the December 10th kickoff of their annual event, ". . . where the Christmas Holidays don't start the day after the Fourth of July Parade and a greeting of 'Merry Christmas' is not the final notice for a holiday bonus!

"Ypsilanti's Depot Town not only saved its old buildings when the rest of America got 'malled,' but it saved the ethic that went with small businesses in a mature commercial/residential district.

"It's a warm and constant feeling all year 'round in Ypsilanti, and this season's festivities continue that tradition.

"Join your friends and neighbors in touring the district on this very special day. It's the way things used to be — and still are, if you look hard enough."

Sally Richie and Joe Wizauer head the committee which is helping to coordinate open houses, a visit from Santa and the return of Our Lady's Madrigal Singers to their annual concert at Aubree's.

Getting ready for resolutions

Most of the rest of the world says how they "hate to see another year roll around" and many of those clichéd complaints go hand-in-hand with "TGIF" and myriad grumblings about "getting to work on time," "tolerating their neighbors' idiosyncracies," and such phrases that would lead us to believe that "people are no damned good."

These must be the people we sometimes see scowling through their windshields at traffic lights while on their way to work.

They don't seem to be the folks we know in the district called Depot Town, however. These rugged individuals smile and nod (sometimes to themselves, sometimes to others), and generally seem to be having what observers might characterize as a good time.

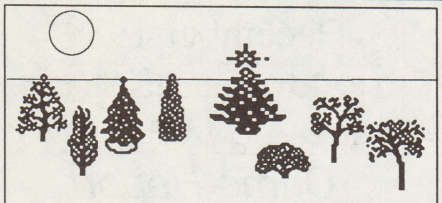
Maybe they're onto something!

Such a happy local custom is often observed at restuarant tables, on the sidewalks of Cross and River Street -- even *in* the street. Someone always seems to be carrying on a conversation just downhill of curbside.

Anyone who has missed out on such sanguine amenities is certianly invited to join the upbeat attitude toward life found in this old commercial block. Stop in at any of the barbershops, restaurants, Farmers' Market, shops or other businesses and you'll see what many consider a small-town uniqueness that still holds forth in Ypsilanti's historic Depot Town.

In fact, you can institutionalize it almost any Thursday night at The Old Caboose. The many activities of the Association are always open to those making new resolutions.

Try it. You just might like it.



Ypsilanti's

Festival of Lights

continues through January 1

Sorry; no carriage rides on December 10th. You'll have to walk through Riverside Park again.

The usual drive to bring horses and carriages to the district for this year's Victorian Holiday failed, as it did the year before, but this time with a clearer reason: Local horsemen have removed their horse's shoes by December and would have to put them on again for ice, snow and concrete. "Have your Christmas holiday event in the fall," said one Belleville horse owner, "and we'd be able to bring many buggies into the district."

"Crime wave" short lived

It used to be that the fancy folks 'up the hill at the Normal College' would keep their kids out of Depot Town because of its bad reputation. Now it's the other way around. The way those college parties have made the news lately, local wags wonder if it might actually be safer and more secure down in the old railroad district.

A case in point: When a pair of Depot Towners arrived home one night this fall, they surprised two burglars who had entered by prying open a window. Not only did they give chase to the interlopers, but all the neighbors down the block joined in. After a trek across the parks, through the river and through downtown, they were apprehended and turned over to police.

Even the diners in the window of a local restaurant came out to see the festivities. Some of those diners must have been from the campus, however. When the theives unloaded their ballast of loose change picked up before being discovered, the customers carefully scooped it up from the street -- and kept their findings for themselves!

1st Prize in the 1988 Depot Town Victorian Holiday BAKING CONTEST

Black Forest Cheesecake

by Darlene W. Mood

Serves 10-12 generously

Preheat oven to 300°F. Line bottom rack with foil.

Chocolate Crumb Crust:

1/2 lb. chocolate wafers or cookies (Don't use Oreo-style)

5 Tbls. butter, melted

Crumble wafers into bowl of food processor fitted with steel blade. Process until crumbs are fine. Add melted butter slowly while turning processor on and off. Press crumb mixture into bottom and sides of a 9" springform pan. Place pan in freezer while preparing filling.

White chocolate cream cheese filing:

2 8-ox. packages of cream cheese (MUST be at room temperature)

2 large eggs

1/2 cup sugar

3 ozs. white chocolate, melted carefully (I like the microwave)

1/2 cup half-and-half

1/2 tsp. clear almond extract

Melt chocolate: In microwave, heat at full power for 1 1/2 minutes. Stir. If not melted, heat for another 30 seconds. Stir. Repeat until just melted. Set aside.

In large bowl, cream cream cheese until well mixed.

Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition.

Add sugar and mix well.

Add melted chocolate; blend gently.

Add half-and-half slowly, mixing well as you add.

Stir in almond extract.

Remove crust from freezer. Pour filing gently into crust and bake at 300° for 50 min.

Remove from oven, but leave oven on while preparing topping.

Cherry-Chocolate Topping:

1 pint sour cream

1/4 cup sugar

2 Tbls. Cherry Kijafa OR 1/2 tsp. almond extract

3 ozs. semi-sweet chocolate bits, melted (as above)

1 can cherry pie filling

Mix sour cream, sugar, and liquer or extract until well mixed. Spread evenly over cheesecake and return to oven for 12 minutes.

While sour cream topping is cooking, melt chocolate. As soon as 12 minutes is up, remove cheesecake from oven and swirl melted chocolate into sour cream topping, being careful not to damage the filling. Return to over; turn off heat and cool cake in oven with door ajar until completely cool.

When completely cool, top with cherry pie filling and chill until ready to serve.

The cookbook containing the above recipe is available at participating Depot Town businesses during the **December 10 Victorian Holiday.**

YPSI FOOD COOP

Fresh Herbs & Spices and Potpourri in bulk

M,T,Th,F 10-7; Wed. 10-9

Sat. 9-7; Sun. 12-5

312 North River Street

483-1520

Annual Holiday Party of the Ypsi Food Co-op

You are speciall invited to come and celebrate the Holidays and all the wonderful work done to keep the Co-op alive.

A Potluck Dinner. Bring a dish to pass and your own table service. Children and everyone welcome. No alcohol please.

Sunday, Dec. 3, 6 pm. Freighthouse Coffeeshop

IMAGE PHOTO LAB

Michael Leach — 11 East Cross

Toni McCarthy — 482-3370

Depot Town decline over, say City Attorney and State Attorney General; City stalls DDA

City Attorney, John Barr, is of the opinion that the properties sought for inclusion in the Depot Town Development Authority district will not meet recent State guidelines. In an opinion from Frank J. Kelley, Attorney General for the State of Michigan, he states, "... a tax increment finance authority may not be established in an area where property values are not declining."

In turn, Mike Agar, the City's interim CED Director turned over to DDA officials Barr's written opinion which states, "it is my opinion that in a DDA area where property taxes are not declining, a DDA may not impose a tax of up to two mills under Section 12, or establish a tax increment financing plan."

Although no figures were shown, the City will not put the item on City Council's agenda for inclusion until DDA members show which properties have appreciated and which have declined. Many observers on the block wonder how the Thompson Block could have possibly risen in value over the last ten years. It is one of the most prominent and least cared for buildings in the neighborhood, but is one of the properties intended to be brought into the DDA district.

The property at City Body, also, is among those sought to be brought in, hoping that its increased taxability will be able to benefit the district. Cynics wonder if the City is stalling the issue to wait for the new assessment on that much-improved property which makes up nearly a quarter of the 'footprint' space of Depot Town.

Other properties recommended for inclusion in the DDA are the garage on Ninde Street, Miller Motors, and Olde Towne Coin and Gold. Virtually all of the other properties in the commercial district of East Cross and North River Streets were included in the original plan nine years ago. Frog Island Park and most of Riverside Park are also part of that master plan for the District.

The Depot Town Development Authority, meeting on the second Thursday of each month in the Freighthouse, has made little progress since its reorganization and rebirth earlier this year. In its August letter to the City, DDA requested placing these properties in the district in the interest of unifying and soldifying the area, but the City did not respond until late October and then only after repeated requests for that response.

At the November DDA meeting, Interim CED, Mike Agar, reported that the City Attorney will probably hold a negative opinion on any local schemes which could capture the increased valuations of local properties for bricks and motar projects.

5th Ward City Councilmember, Lynda Hummel, has pledged to work to get the issues of unifying the district, forming a Development Plan, Ad Valorem Tax and Tax Increment Financing before City Council for discussion this month. Several DDA appointees have said they see no point in continuing their planning if the City is not going to be able to implement it.

Changes imminent? New ads for New Year

Regular sponsors of this little *monthly* are well aware that they are not really 'advertisers' in a true sense. They are known throughout the district as 'sponsors,' 'supporters,' and 'backers' of much of what has been accomplished in this old neighborhood for more than a decade.

That printed support has shown up in this little newsletter for thirteen years now, and it's time to do it again. The rates continue at $10 per month and the policies remain the same: only local businesses, change the copy whenever you wish (by leaving it in the Caboose mail slot before the third Thursday), and we'll bill you as frequently as volunteer service can.

Some say that no one buys a product in Depot Town just because they 'saw the ad,' but most agree that the life as reported in *The Rag* is what keeps them coming down here in this kind of business climate.

All readers agree that the support of our businesses is much appreciated.

Anyone wishing to change copy, camera-ready art or begin a new display should make their wishes know by the above mail slot or by calling the editor at 482-6371.

Teachers Shop & LEARNING CENTER, LTD.
313·482-6373
15 E. CROSS STREET • YPSILANTI, MI. 48198

YOUR K12 CONNECTION
all materials for CLASSROOMS & CURRICULA

Ypsilanti's Farmers' Market
in historic Depot Town
Holiday Bazaars
December 2 & 9, 8 am - 3 pm

Ike's Depot Barbershop
40 East Cross

Support the merchants who support
The Depot Town Rag

Yes, we have curds!
2 lb. aged Cheddar $9.59
Ask about our holiday gift items
Call Wed. or Sat. 483-1480
or 459-1995 any time.
MESSINA'S CHEESE
At the Ypsilanti Farmers' Market

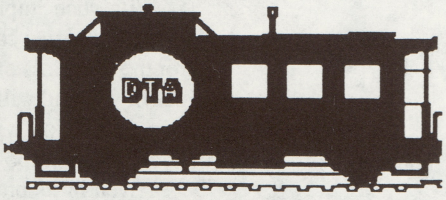
Tech-Style JUNCTION
9 East Cross Street • 485-8807
• Custom screen-printed wearables
• Air-brushed T-shirts
• Hand-lettered signs & license plates

The Depot Town Association, Inc. October, 1989

7:38 - Meeting called to order. The minutes from the 21 September DTA meeting were read and approved.

Treasurer's Report - No figures are available this month.

Judy Monaghan is continuing to wade through last year's records in order to confirm the amount of State sales tax owed by the DTA. The State Discovery Division has been notified that we are proceeding in good faith.



All monies owed to the Ypsilanti Heritage Festaival have been paid in full, although an updated invoice was never received.

Standing Committees:

Budget/Events - the annual Depot Town Association Halloween Paty is right on track for 6:00 pm, Tuesday, October 31st. Jerry Meadows reports that the party will feature cider, donuts, chese, apples, pumpkins, and a costume contest, with a lot of fun and scariness thrown in.

Depot Town's Victorian Holiday is scheduled to begin on Sunday, December 10 at 11 am. Joe Wizauer, of Hon's Flowers, and Sally Richie, of The Occasion Station, are organizing the event and plan to produce a promotional brochure/schedule in late November. A recipe book from last year's baking contest will be featured and hopefully the Madrigal Singers will return.

DTA will be making a second request to the City for the use of the Freight House as an Event House.

DTA will also request a statement of intent relating to the Freight House Master Plan, which sems to have been forgotten too soon. Last month's request brought news that the Freight House could not meet building codes for housing events, but no formal response or explanation was forthcoming. This will not affect the Halloween Party.

The Winter Jazz Series will not be happening again this year due, in part, to the above mentioned lack of space.

It is time to begain formal talks with The Ark to redifine our cooperating agreement for the Frog Island Jazz Festival in June of 1990.

Caboose - I'ts red and it's got heat, and it's only $25.00 per event. To rent the characterful Caboose, contact Gary McKeever at 483-4245.

Engineering Society - Don't labor away the last warm days of the season; let the engineers take away your tasks. Contact via The Old Caboose mail slot.

Rag Report - The Rag continues to cover Depot Town - Past to Present, featuring articles on the early Design and Critique of Ypsilanti, along with the latest Heritage Festival updates.

DTA will be publishing a questionnaire in The Rag to help serve you better and to find out What You Really Think.

2nd Vice Presidents:

Engine Club - The Depot Town Antique Engine Club elected officers at their last meeting.

Thanks to the Engine Club for its generous donation for the Plaza Farm Wagon materials and construction.

Other Business:

The power base has changed in Depot Town. Detroit Edison will now be billing us for the electicity used by the Caboose and the Depot Town building sign.

The Festival of Lights is scheduled to turn on Sunday, November 19. Depot Town is planning to turn on its building lights as well. In preparation, DTA president, Paul Fetters, is performing the maintainence required in replacing bulbs and attaching strings to rooftops. If you'd like to lend a hand, contact Paul at River Artworks.

DTA will contact the City regarding the much-needed maintenance of the Freight House lights.

The Historic District Commission has been contacted regarding the parking lot barriers behind the Sidetrack. They have offered an opinion that the unsightly piles of dirt are not allowed in the historic district of Depot Town. Action remains to be taken.

A meeting at 9:00 am, Thursday, October 26 at Aubree's Saloon will address Depot Town's representation in the Heritage Festival Committee.

Carolyn McKeever has been elected to the Board of Directors of The Ark. Gary McKeever has been elected president of the Board of Directors of the Ypsilanti Recycling Center

The Best Yet Award - to Great Neighbors who will literally run out of their way to help. It sure is good to know you're out there in Depot Town.

The Golden Goose Award - to those who didn't return their bounty on the day Depot Town's streets were paved with gold.

Association meets on the third Thursday of each month in The Old Caboose.

December 1989

Depot Towners are invited to participate in any or all of the following activities for the good of this old commercial district:

Foundation

8 p.m. Thursday, 12/7

in The Old Caboose

Development Authority (DDA)

7:30 p.m. Thursday, 12/14

Freighthouse Coffee Shop

Association

7:30 p.m. Thursday, 12/21

in The Old Caboose

Antique Engine Club

6:00 p.m. Thursday, 12/9

Ann Arbor's German Park

Same old jazz? Maybe!

Depot Town merchants are regrouping to breathe life back into the jazz concept in the district. Both the Winter Series and the Heritage Competition have faltered in the past years, but the Frog Island concert lives on. Stay tuned to this paper.

THE DEPOT TOWN RAG

A publication of the Depot Town Association, Inc. a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to preserving the unique character of the neighborhood and to the enhancement of its business climate.

-Tom Dodd, editor

Depot Town Association, Inc.
Paul Fetters, president
c/o The Old Caboose
400 Market Place
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198

Active Memberships :

- Ypsilanti Chamber of Commerce
- Washtenaw Council for the Arts
- Neighborhood Associations of Michigan

Hansen's

STANDARD PRINTING

35 E. Cross St. • Ypsilanti, MI 48198

Depot Town

(313) 483-0339

FAX (313) 483-3130

Mon. - Fri. 8:00-5:00
Sat. 9:00-12:00

YPSILANTI, MICHIGAN

Report Upon Proposed Improvements, forming a basis for a General City Plan

Olmsted Brothers, Landscape Architects, Brookline, Mass. December 31, 1913

The River and its Shores

The Huron River, with its large natural reservoirs and its steep channel, was long ago claimed for economic uses, by water power development in a small un-systematic way. Many mills were built; but most of them have since fallen into disuse and decay, and the river is now largely in a picturesque state of neglect. Its shores are now overgown in many places, pools and rapids break its monotony, while railways and public roads cross and recross it in many places.

In strong contrast to the picturesque charm of wild and neglected shores, however, as found along most of the river, is the evidence in some places of careless or willful destruction of the natural beauties. Crude, bare railway embankments, ill-designed bridges, badly-kept pigsties, public and private rubbish dumps, and obnoxious sewers have been allowed to defile the shores and promise to become still worse as the population increases. The river with its many advantages as a naturally beautiful feature of the City is now almost wholly ignored, or worse, it is defiled and treated as a menace to adjacent property.

The river is likely to change again soon in character, as the neglected state of its power possibilities cannot persist; development of further power is sure to come and should come. The ideal development of the river power can be brought about only through large investments and extensive operations made in a way to utilize its entire capacity. When such development comes, the character of the waterway will be fixed for all time; instead of a rapid stream, there will be a series of long ponds or reservoirs having placid waters separated by comparatively high dams. The shores wil be permanently established and the level of the water will be fairly uniform, fluctuating but little with floods or with seasons.

CAPTION: The Duebel Mill from the (north). One of the few mills still making direct use of the water power. [On the site of today's Teachers Shop, taken from near today's Recycling Center, looking south. -ed)

When the river has become thus fully controlled the adjacent lands will become more valuable for permanent improvements, recreative interests along the shores will increase, and the need for good roads and street car lines following the shores or giving access to them at many points will be much greater than at present.

With such improvements the lands overlooking the river can be made most desireable for the best class of rural residences, and such use of the land will best serve the community in connection with the use of the river for recreative purposes.

Even in its present condition the river is considerably used for boating. It is, like the city streets, a public way. The use of the streets and the presence of obstructions in them are regulated by the public authorities. The river is not under such supervision, but it should be, and it can be so cared for at relatively small expense if under skillful management. The relation between the waterway and the highways is at present absolutely ignored. Public acccess to the river is to be had now almost exclusively by trespass, and this condition can be remedied only be acquiring public holdings along its banks such as are hereinafter recommended. These reservations are needed not only to give access to the river for those who would use it for recreation, but for the sake of preserving the remarkable natural beauty of portions of its shores and for restoring their beauty where it has been needlessly and unprofitably destroyed.

Next Month: Olmsted Brothers' 1913 recommendations for River, Forest and East Cross Streets. Who listens?

Red Rooster Pizza
... and dairy bar
37 East Cross • 483-4555

SIDETRACK
Good Food, Good Drinks, Good Times
56 East Cross Street
483-1053

Let's eat out down in Depot Town!

the mean bean café
Authentic Mexican Food
485-MEAN
17 E. Cross St.
Dine-in
Carry-out
Free Delivery

Old Town Restaurant
Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
38 East Cross Street

Aubree's Saloon & Second Floor
39 East Cross Street

RAGTIME

Depot Doo

Fine Design in Hair Style
25 East Cross • 484-3045

Festival of Lights

continues through
January 1
in Riverside Park

42 East Cross
485-7546

Olde Towne Coin & Gold

24 East Cross

483-6155

ANTIQUES

Something for Everyone
CROSS STREET ANTIQUES
33 East Cross Street
Antiques Bought & Sold
Hours: Tues - Sun 11-5
482-4525

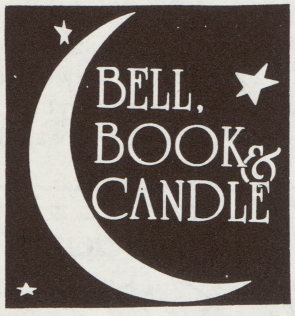
THOMPSON BUILDING MALL
Antiques and Stained Glass
412 North River • 483-3472
Buying & Selling of Estates and/or Single Items

JAMES MacDONALD'S ANTIQUES
&
APPLE ANNIE'S VINTAGE CLOTHING
29 East Cross • 481-0555

We love to buy Antiques
DEPOT EXCHANGE ANTIQUES
4 E. Cross • 482-1780
Next to Sidetrack
Professional Stripping & Refinishing

Our Little Secret

Resale Clothing & Other Niceties
23 E. Cross Street
483-3637



44 E. Cross St. • 487-1970

Hon's Flowers & Fancies

46 East Cross
482-2124

J&R TRADING POST & GENERAL STORE

"A blend of past & present, with an eye on the future!"

21 East Cross • 483-5870

TED'S Auto Electric

307 North River • 483-1238

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- Gowns for all occasions "Wedding, Proms, Pageants"
- Custom Apparel
- Evening & Career Wear
- Alterations

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Tues-Fri 10 am -6 pm
Sat 10 am - 5 pm
Evenings by appt.

482-2010
27 E. Cross

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√Marketing
√Technical Support

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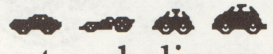
KELLY Temporary Services
The Kelly Girl® People - The First And The Best.™

City Radiator

100 North River 483-2248

CITY BODY

20 East Cross Street



Front end alignment & Collision repair